

# DE-PLATFORMING: THE THREAT FACING FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

Last Updated 11/04/22

## THE PROBLEM

Big Tech's unpredictable de-platforming of faith-based and pro-life organizations and their leaders has become so frequent that these organizations may wonder whether they can rely on continuous service from these companies, particularly social media providers. Leaders must respond decisively to the changed landscape.

## THE CONTEXT

During the first quarter of 2021, faith-based organizations were de-platformed at least weekly by Big Tech companies, particularly those providing social media services. Now, in the months following *Dobbs*, pro-life and religious organizations are being de-platformed at the same almost weekly rate. As the harms caused by content moderation multiply, nonprofits need to understand who is being de-platformed, why, and what strategies are effective for overcoming de-platforming.

## THE LANDSCAPE

Four clear takeaways are emerging in this area:

- **Organizations with missions centered around important cultural and policy issues are at greater risk of de-platforming.** For example, pro-life organizations, pro-family organizations, Christian organizations addressing issues related to human sexuality, and faith-based news organizations have been targeted more often than organizations that run tutoring programs or soup kitchens.
- **De-platformed organizations often receive little or no explanation of why they were de-platformed.** Many organizations stated their attempts at communication with the Big Tech provider seemed to fall into a "black hole."
- **De-platforming usually impacts all functionalities on the social media service, not just the ability to publish.** This means that contacts, followers, and historical publications and posts will not be available.
- **Public pressure and media attention can help.** Many organizations that have successfully had their accounts restored attribute their success to public support, particularly through media coverage and related grassroots pressure, rather than to the tech company's own appeal process.

Thus, organizations should self-assess their risk of being de-platformed. If a significant risk is present, organizations should plan for possible de-platforming, reduce the potential for harm to the organization and its constituents, and increase the chances of a favorable resolution.

Notably, no formal data cataloging incidents of de-platforming is currently available. This is primarily because the problem is relatively new and the decision process behind de-platforming is opaque and subjective.

## ACTION NEEDED

1. **Preparation.** De-platforming will harm your organization much less if you implement back-up systems to protect key information and activities. See Napa Legal's whitepaper "[What to Do if Your Nonprofit Relies on Big Tech](#)" for some concrete steps you can take to protect your organization.
2. **Community.** Be intentional about connecting with and supporting other faith-based organizations.
3. **Conviction.** Don't dilute your religious message or succumb to pressure not to share the truth. We need the truth more than ever, and the efforts to de-platform highlight that. Rather than acting out of fear, organizations should be prudent and plan ahead.

# Appendix I: Cases of De-platforming

Last Updated 11/04/2022

Vertical line indicates update since first publication

Date of Incident	Organization	Platform	Story	Reason for De-platforming	Response/ Outcome*	Time to Resolve
10/22/2022	EWTN	YouTube <i>Polish Account Suspended</i>	<u>Catholic News Agency</u>	None Provided	Account restored after complaints from viewers	3 and 1/2 days
9/19/2022	CatholicVote	TikTok <i>Account Banned</i>	<u>National Review</u>	Posting "hateful behavior"	<u>Account restored</u> after significant media coverage and pushback	Approx. 2 weeks
8/4/2022	Live Action	TikTok <i>Advertisements Banned</i>	<u>Townhall</u>	Ads "driven by partisan political motives"	Pushback from Live Action; no known response from TikTok	No Known Response
7/28/2022	Ruth Institute	YouTube <i>3 Videos Removed</i>	<u>LifeSite</u>	Violated YouTube's "medical misinformation policy"	Pushback from Ruth Institute; no known response from YouTube	No Known Response
7/20/2022	Heartbeat International/ Abortion Pill Reversal	Facebook <i>Page Removed</i>	<u>LifeNews</u>	"Violation of Community Standards"	Appealed to Facebook; <u>Page restored</u>	About 1 Day
7/15/2022	Moms For Liberty	PayPal <i>Funds Frozen</i>	<u>Florida's Voice</u>	None Provided	Florida Gov. DeSantis pledged to crack down on Big Tech censorship and "woke" banking; Funds unfrozen	Several Days
6/24/2022	Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America	TikTok <i>Account Suspended</i>	<u>LifeNews</u>	"Multiple violations of Community Guidelines"	Pushback from SBA Pro-Life America; <u>account restored</u>	Same Day
10/13/2021	Catholic Connect	Instagram <i>Post Removed</i>	<u>Catholic Connect</u>	"Violation of Community Guidelines"	No known response	No Known Response
9/13/2021	Live Action	Google <i>Advertisements canceled</i>	<u>Catholic World Report</u>	Abortion pill reversal ads included: "Misleading advertising," "Restricted Medical Content"	No known response	No Known Response
9/3/2021	Texas Right to Life	GoDaddy <i>website taken down</i>	<u>NPR</u>	"violating the company's terms of service"	Texas Right to Life attempted to move website to a new hosting platform	No Known Response

Date of Incident	Organization	Platform	Story	Reason for De-platforming	Response/ Outcome	Time to Resolve
8/7/2021	Immanuel Baptist Church; Carl Trueman	Google (Youtube) <i>Live Stream cut mid-presentation</i>	<a href="#">WSJ</a>	"Content Violation"	No known response	No Known Response
6/24/2021	The Babylon Bee	Mailchimp. <i>Account Suspended.</i>	<a href="#">Twitter</a>	Violated the email marketing service's "standard terms of use and acceptable use" policy	After public outcry, the account was reinstated.	Same Day
5/19/2021	The Jerusalem Prayer Team	Facebook. <i>Page Removed.</i>	<a href="#">NY Post</a>	Page was not "policy compliant"	No known response	No Known Response
5/11/2021	Sohrab Amari	Amazon. <i>Book Removed</i>	<a href="#">The Daily Citizen</a>	None Provided	After public outcry, the book reappeared in search results.	Approximately 1 week
5/1/2021	Patrick Coffin Media	Kartra. <i>Conference Removed.</i>	<a href="#">National Catholic Register</a>	None Provided	Conference moved to a new platform.	No Known Response
3/28/2021	Professor Robert Gagnon, Houston Baptist University	Facebook. <i>Account Suspended.</i>	<a href="#">Twitter</a>	Content: Post questioning transgender ideology deemed hate speech.	Appealed to Facebook's Oversight board, no known reversal of Facebook's position.	24 hour Suspension; No Known Response to Appeal
3/3/2021	Catholic Connect	Instagram. <i>Account Suspended.</i>	<a href="#">CNA</a>	Copyright?	Created a new account; appealed suspension; coverage in CAN, Faith News Network; No known reversal of Instagram's position.	
3/2/2021	Clarence Thomas (Catholic Supreme Court Justice): <i>Documentary, Created Equal: Clarence Thomas in His Own Words</i>	Amazon. <i>Documentary Removed</i>	<a href="#">WSJ</a>	Unclear		No Known Response
2/23/2021	Irish Catholic Bishop Kevin Duran	Twitter. <i>Tweet restored after media coverage and protest.</i>	<a href="#">Catholic World Report</a>	Content: Post in question said assisted suicide is not an expression of freedom or dignity	Coverage in Catholic World Report; Twitter initially refused to reverse its position, but after almost one month restored the post.	About 2 Days
2/21/2021	Ryan T. Anderson; <i>Book, When Harry Became Sally</i>	Amazon. <i>Removed book from the site.</i>	<a href="#">USA Today</a>	Content	Public Reaction; Continued sales through publisher and other outlets; Amazon did not reverse decision.	Not Resolved
2/2021	Lifesite News	Youtube. <i>Channel removed and all videos gone.</i>	<a href="#">LifeSite</a>	Content: "promotes prevention methods that contradict local health authorities or WHO"	Coverage by religious news outlets; defaulted to backup platform Rumble; YouTube did not reverse decision.	Unknown Response Time

Date of Incident	Organization	Platform	Story	Reason for De-platforming	Response/ Outcome	Time to Resolve
2/8/2021	TAN Publishing: <i>Books: Stations of the Cross for Kids, The Devil and Karl Marx, The Anti-Mary Exposed, and Motherhood Redeemed</i>	Facebook, Instagram. <i>Ads Removed for several books.</i>	<a href="#"><u>Crisis Magazine</u></a>	Content: "Ad Can't Run: Ads must not contain shocking, sensational, inflammatory, or excessively violent content. Read our Sensational Content Policy."	Coverage in some religious news outlets	Unknown Response Time
1/27/2021	Professor Robert Gagnon, Houston Baptist University	Facebook. <i>Account Suspended.</i>	<a href="#"><u>Christian Headlines</u></a>	Content: Post questioning transgender ideology deemed in violation of "Community Standards on violence and incitement."	Coverage in some religious news outlets	Suspension for 24 hours
1/2021	Saintly Heart: <i>Wooden Figurine of Our Lady of Guadalupe</i>	Instagram. <i>Product tags removed.</i>	<a href="#"><u>National Catholic Register</u></a>	Product: "Product with overtly sexualized positioning."	Coverage in National Catholic Register; No known reversal of Facebook's position .	Unknown Response Time
1/2021	Catholic World Report	Twitter. <i>Account Suspended.</i>	<a href="#"><u>CNA</u></a>	Content: Post in question discussed transgenderism. Twitter said it was suspended in error.	Widespread response; Twitter reversed position.	5 days
1/2021	Focus on the Family's Daily Citizen	Twitter. <i>Account Suspended.</i>	<a href="#"><u>CNA</u></a>	Content: Post in question discussed transgenderism. Twitter said it was suspended in error.	Widespread response; Twitter reversed position.	Unknown
10/2020	Babylon Bee	Twitter. <i>Post Removed. Ability to monetize suspended.</i>	<a href="#"><u>Fox</u></a>	Content: A satirical post was taken down for "inciting violence."	Media coverage; Facebook originally stood by its decision. After media exposure, Facebook reversed its stance and apologized for the error.	1 Week
10/2020	Susan B. Anthony List	Facebook/ Third-Party Fact Checker <i>Adds Removed.</i>	<a href="#"><u>National Catholic Register</u></a>	Content: Fact checkers said information on late-term abortions were "debunked."	Pushback by SBA List led to the reversal of the determination and an apology.	Resolved but timeline uncertain

\*Napa Legal has reached out to these organizations to obtain more details regarding the incidents. This report will be updated as responses become available.



## CONNECT WITH NAPA LEGAL

Do you know an attorney or lay apostolate leader who might be interested in learning more about Napa Legal's work or in partnering with Napa Legal to empower evangelization? Would you like to receive updates on legal, corporate, and policy issues relevant to faith-based nonprofits?

Here are four ways to connect with Napa Legal:



Contact us via email  
at [info@napalegalinstitute.org](mailto:info@napalegalinstitute.org)



[Visit our website to learn more  
about Napa Legal's mission](#)



[Join Napa Legal's network of  
attorneys and lay apostolate  
leaders](#)



[Subscribe to Napa Legal's  
mailing list to receive updates  
on our content](#)